

Vermont Senators Push Education Bill

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Vermont lawmakers are pushing to make sure schools in the state have flexibility when it comes to the No Child Left Behind Act.

Senator Jeffords and Senator Leahy guided a new version of the "Ed Flex" bill through the Senate last week. No child left behind hasn't always been popular in Vermont. The federal program requires states to meet specific requirements, like standardized test scores.

"Some of the things for a state like Vermont that doesn't need the requirements could lead to lower standards instead of higher," said Sen. Jim Jeffords (I-Vermont).

Senator Jeffords re-introduced Ed Flex in the Senate. The program gives a state's schools more power to choose. Vermont has strong accountability. That means the state continues to improve academic standards. The bill rewards states like Vermont by allowing schools to redirect money slated for specific programs to the whole school.

"Vermont has always done really well, one of the best I can say, so that is important," said Jeffords.

The Department of Education says that states should have flexibility, and that it's part of no child left behind.

"We've seen states take advantage of that," said Kerri Briggs, an Education Department Policy Advisor. "We put money in programs that the government says are important but flexibility to move money around is what states are using.

Ed Flex passed in the Senate on a unanimous vote, but the bill still has a long way to go. Senator Jeffords' legislation will have to pass another test when The House looks at the bill.

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